

MAYOR ANTHONY A. WILLIAMS
DOWNTOWN BID ANNUAL MEETING & MOMENTUM AWARDS LUNCHEON

MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2003
CITY MUSEUM OF WASHINGTON
801 K STREET, NW
1:00 P.M.

770th 5th Street, NW. For those of you that may not know, 770 5th Street is Avalon Bay—a brand new luxury apartment complex that faces the National Building Museum and has the MCI Center in its backyard. If you haven't been on Avalon Bay's roof yet, you should. You should bring an umbrella and rubber boots, but you should.

From the roof, you can see from the U.S. Capitol to the National Cathedral—and you can see cranes tracing across the skyline of our downtown.

- They're creating housing and offices.
- They're building restaurants and hotels.
- They're raising new shopping and nightspots.
- They're building the downtown that we envisioned our downtown could be—and have made our downtown become.

And for that, I have all of you to thank. When I took office, we set out to build a living, breathing downtown—an engine that could drive the redevelopment of this city. And by any measure, I think we've done just that. To all of you who helped make this happen, congratulations.

But now it's time for a new challenge. Now that downtown's engine is steaming along, it's time to couple more cars onto the train.

As you know, we've just kicked off our brand-new marketing campaign, “city living, dc style!” We started this campaign to bring 100,000 new residents into our city. You're all responsible for five new residents each.

But we also started this campaign to help unify the messages coming out of this city. Right now, everyone has something to say—but not everyone is speaking with one voice.

I see the same challenge with our downtown:

- We have great food and great theater. But the restaurants and the theaters should be saying in one voice, “Come downtown to eat and then see a show.”

- We have elegant and hip hotels, and world-class museums. But the hoteliers and the museums should be saying in one voice, “You should stay and sightsee downtown.”
- Every one of you in this room offers something to do downtown. But every one of us should be saying with one voice, “Where’s it happening in DC? It’s happening downtown.”

That’s what I think we need to get everyone on-board the downtown train—we need “one voice.”

We have great places to live. So let’s market them: If you’re building housing downtown, I challenge you sit together, talk about your issues and concerns, and find new ways to market your product and help more people call downtown “home.”

We have great culture and entertainment. Let’s sell it: I challenge the theatres, museums and restaurants to sit together and come up with a plan to further sell our downtown as a destination.

Great cities create excitement about themselves. Let’s find new ways to tell world about the progress we have made—and the progress that’s going to come.

But keeping downtown steaming along is more than just message. We have great parks and public space. Let’s use and improve them: You may know that a new partnership between the National Park Service and the BID is taking shape. To keep that momentum, I challenge you to work together to make the parks in the BID as beautiful as they can be—our visitors expect it and our residents deserve it.

Great cities take on the tough problems of transportation. Let’s do that: We’ve got to move residents and tourists around our city, not just in and out. The BID and others have taken the lead with the creation of a circulator bus system. But there’s still work ahead to make the circulator a reality.

So, this is my challenge to us all: It’s time for a new action plan for downtown—a plan that addresses tough issues, suggests real solutions and speaks with one voice.

In the next few weeks, you’ll be hearing from Rich Bradley and his team about collaborating on this new action plan—and I’m urging all of you to get involved.

I challenge the best minds downtown to work with the BID over the next few months to create new ways for us to collaborate—to tell the story and turn problems into solutions.

I'm a big fan of architecture and engineering. That's why I think the former convention center is such a beautiful building. But when I need inspiration, I often look to the great works of architecture—and one of those works, I think, is our downtown.

If you need inspiration to rise to this challenge, then you should see our downtown in its entirety. And 770 5th Street is the place from where to look. Thank you.

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